**UK government Covid19 press conference 25 April 2020**

**Jeremy Hoad**

(usual caveats apply to this live transcript / commentary)

(press conference now preceded by advice video with trancey dance music)

**Attending**

Priti Patel, Home Secretary  
Prof Stephen Powis, NHS England  
Lynne Owens, National Crime Agency

**Figures**

640,792 tested (28,760 since yesterday)

148,377 positive 4,913 in

16,411 hospitalised

20,319 dead

813 increase in dead over last 24 hours

**Patel**

Plan to slow spread, increase capacity

Stay at home etc.

Terrible virus

Milestone passed

Entire nation grieving

My deepest sympathies etc.

Tribute to frontline workers, will not be forgotten

Spoke about impact on crime and tough but necessary measures, announced domestic abuse Your are Not Alone campaign

Incredible impact, 98m views online

(that’s how success is measured is it? By website clicks?)

Refuse to allow criminals to take advantage

Burglary, shoplifting all lower than last year

Message – our world class law enforcement is adapting and they are onto you.

Border Force found £1m cocaine

NCA taking down phishing scams

1300 potential child abuse cases identified by NCA

International action to crush criminal gangs

Heroine seized in Pakistan

Thank banks and others protecting pple from becoming victims

Outstanding police

Extraordinarily dangerous driving, using roads as race tracks

Police and fire continue to put their arms around pple and supporting those in need

Thoughts and prayers with S Yorks police officer who died responding to a call this week

Courage, compassion and commitment of police

Lifesaving instructions to saty at home

Sacrifices made, jobs lost, futures on hold, weddings cancelled

Vulnerable, elderly, children and yng pple

Extraordinary national effort

Not lose sight of fact our efforts are working

You have fostered a spirit of national unity

Your sacrifices are undoubtedly saving lives

Iumperative pple continue to follow rules

Want to return to normal asap

5 tests must be met before easing these lifesaving measures

(not in south Manchester, it seems)

Stay strong, embrace spirit of national untiy

Stay at home etc.

**Owens**

Criminsals have adapted but law enforcement has also adapted

New environment for all of us

Officers and policing doing amazing job engaging with public and to stay at home etc.

Serious and organised criminals looking to take advatgae

Showing them as immoral, corrupt

Border force, police etc responding to protect public

Ensuring no safe space for criminals

Protecting pple from those trying to flout lockdown rules

24 firearms recovered

Continue to prevent corrosive harm of the scourge of drugs

360kg of class A drugs seized

Supply of illegal drugs is transnational

NCA contributed to seizure of over 1.7m tonnes of illicit drugs

Exceptional work undertaken

We are working to protect the border

Attempts to reach the UK by small boast being thwarted

86 instances working with other regulatory bodies to tackle selling of fake PPE kit

National Cyber Security Centre and others taken down over 2,000 scams in last month

Collective national effort

Public can help fight crime too

Simple steps to protect yourself and loved ones

Protect your children online – range of materiual available

Thinkyouknow.co.uk

Stay safe online – strong passwords, turning on backup

Cyber aware website

Look after your money

Targeting by phone, text and email

Be vigilant to scams

Police with never ask you for account details

Report suspicions and fraud to your bank immediately

We are pursuing most harmsful criminals relentlessly

We will help ensure economic recovery is not subverted by organised crime

(basically this woman praised herself and her colleagues for doing their basic jobs)

**Powis**

NHS has pulled out all the stops and has not been overwhelmed

NHS is also there is you have a condition that is not coronavirus

Stroke, heart attack symptoms, pregnant women, ill children – go online or call 11 or 999 in a real emergency

Fast diagnosis and treatment is crucial, do not delay, the NHS is there for you

Slide

Transport

Continue to see reductions in public transport

Concern motor vehicles starting to rise again

Slide

Apple Maps data on mobility trends

Sun. is out, tempting. To go out

We are far. From there yet, critical pple maintain compliance with social distancing instructions

Stay at home

Slide

New cases reasonably stable

Seeing benefits of social distancing measures

Slide

Hospitalisations

We are getting a sustained reduction, p’tic in London, beginnings of decline elsewhere as well

Slide

Critical care beds

Beginning to see decline

New data on NI but not currently comparable as cumulative, not daily data

Slide

Hospital deaths

Trend towards decline

Slide

Global death comparison

**Questions**

28/3 Powis said done very well if fewer than 20k now passed – shld strategy have been diff?

Powis – sad day for the nation

Everybody’s heart goes out etc.

New virus, global pandemic, once in a century, huge challenge for UK and world

We won’t get over this pandemic in the next few weeks, not a sprint, a marathon dealing with virus

Moving past 20k deaths shows critical need to follow social distancing guidelines

(so why not introduced earlier?)

Patel – nation will be deeply moved

Every death a tragedy

We’ve made great deal of progress

Not out of the woods yet

At the end of the day portect capacity of NHS through social distancing, hygiene

Deeply tragic and moving moment thoughts with families etc.

(both ignored the question)

Any circumstances you can envisage relaxing lockdown?

Patel – govt has been abundantly clear on 5 tests and when to consider adjusting current measures, not right now clearly

Our lives have changed, pay tribute to everybody

Have to meet 5 tests

Really devastating moment in terms of number of pple who have died

We are all putting our shoulder to the wheel

(complete waffle)

20k death in hospitals but when will care homes data come in?

Health surcharge – shld this be scrapped?

Powis – we have always resisted predicting when peaks will occur

Need to deal with care homes swiftly and correctly

More testing to get on top of infections

Staff working round the clock

Tribute to staff and carers and at home working hard to get on top of virus

(nothing new, ignored / refused to answer the actual question)

Patel – pple working night and day

Many changes around immigration and work status, we are providing great deal of support

Range of measures under review including visas surcharge

Looking at everything to continue to support everyone on the frontline in the NHS

(Avoided question)

Care sector feel they are dealing with this virus blind - how is it spreading and where?

Powis – PHE stepping up support for care homes

(after ignoring them for months, it seems)

We care and worry about care home sector and are increasing support

(meaningless waffle)

Motor vehicles starting to rise, concern, govt sending out mixed messages saying stay at home but allowing non-essential work to take place – response?

Why can’t pple extend their households?

Patel – government’s message has been clear and consistent from day 1, also been clear about pple going to work

Seeing an increase in journeys

Understand frustration

We have enforcement measures, they are being applied, they are working

Officers engaging in communities

Stay at home and enforcing social distancing essential

(hollow laughter after events in Manchester this week with hundreds, if not thousands breaking social distancing and lockdown rules)

(avoided question / denied point raised)

Powis – household to household chain of spread addressed by social distancing measures

Public done v well to break these chains

Releasing too early would start going backwards

Too early yet

No mixed messages but opening DIY shops sending mixed messages?

Patel – shops are open working well

Always clear if you can work you should

Follow practices and measures

Advice from scientists and medical officers

Government has always been clear in messaging

(not true. Saying something doesn’t make it true, Ms Patel)

RCS says backlog of cancelled operations could take 5 years to clear – how many. Lives will these delays cost?

Did Cummings say anything at SAGE and if so what?

Patel – DHSC will work with PHE. And NHS to highlight and address issues you raise

Want services to resume in right and proper way

Certain prioritisations and treatments in current situation

Need to make sure NHS is adequately resourced

(bloody cheek after a decade of Conservative government imposed funding cuts and austerity avoided responding to qtns directly with waffle)

Powis – we don’t want to see delays of that order of magnitude

Had to step down elective surgeries but want to step that back up again asap

CMO has outlined concerns over related indirect impacts of virus

Emergency services still there for you

Will take many years to see consequences of harm to population

Want to get elective services up and running as quickly as we can and also mange covid patients

I’ve been attending SAGE since Feb- absolutely about scientists, scientific discussion btwn scientific advisers, robust discussion at time, provide advice to govt and govt officials

(completely ignored specific Cummings qtn)

Did Cummings make any contributions at those meetings?

Powis – advice comes from scientists to govt

(again avoided / ignored the question)

Sacrifices by British public – school closed – do you not sympathise with parents childcare and jobs?

Patel – as a parent myself of course I sympathise

(as a parent yourself – shut up you stupid woman, that is patronising and irrelevant)

Schools that have opened have been brilliant, remarkable, supporting children of key workers and vulnerable children

I have already outlined the 5 tests

Need to do this in right and proper way

(that’s her phrase of the day)

Go back to school in the right way at the right time

Any active planning for schools to return? Any assurance this being done?

Time of entering lockdown debated previously but what was the point of delaying the point we entered if this has to go on and on and on?

Patel – govt working night and day

understand frustrations

right we consider advice, we are doing that we are absolutely doing that

Cannot move back to how things were easily

We are working with advisers and others from business and industry

We want to prevent second wave of horrendous virus

To move to any change need to make sure preventative measures are in place

British pple have looked to their. Govt to ensure their health, their safety their wellbeing is absolutely paramount to protect them and we continue to work to achieving that

(Oh, please. Drivel. Ignored the question.)

Irresponsible to give date for when Putting our shoulder to wheel night and day to look at how we can do things differently to do the right thing in the right way

(Good grief this woman is a patronising idiot. She has leant the Big Government Book of Useless Pointless Phrases and bloody hell, she sticks to them)

Powis – balance of issues, diff choices

(repeated previous statements)

Patel – final message stellar work of NCA

I say to criminals seeking to exploit this virus our police and crime agencies are on to you

Thank British people, urge you to back extraordinary national effort

Stay at home etc.

(Essentially Patel’s message is anything the govt does is right and she / it will ignore anything they don’t want to talk about.)

(ends with govt warning video)